

CSD & Sprint: The Nation's Leader in TRS and VRS Operations CSD Representatives

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Leveling the Playing Field

As a result of CSD's partnership with Sprint, which began in 1991 in South Dakota, CSD has been at the forefront in developing relay operator solutions and VRS technologies for Sprint customers that have enabled Deaf and Hard of Hearing people to communicate as independently as possible with the help of technology. By removing the technological barriers in communications, the playing field for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people – in the world at large – is being leveled.

What is CSD? CSD's Array of Services

- Relay Services (TRS & VRS)
 - Interpreting Services
 - Human Services
 - Training and Development
 - Communications Technology (PAS & TAS)
 - Media and Community Relations
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CSD TRS Operations - Sprint

- CSD now processes more than 65% of all Sprint TRS calls nationwide
 - CSD currently supports TRS calls from 27 Sprint states
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General History of TRS Rates (traditional text to voice)

- Funding not mandated prior to July of 1993
 - Generally non-profit operated prior to July of 1993 (various standards with some state funds)
 - Few state contracts with telcos for TRS at costs of up to \$7 per call (AT&T only provider until 1990 Sprint award in Texas)
 - NECA fund established (attach NECA reimbursement rate chart)
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The History of the CSD – Sprint VRS Partnership

- Texas VRS trials in 1994 and 1996
 - Texas VRS in '00 (state funded)
 - Washington VRS in '01 (state funded)
 - CSD provides VRS Nationwide in '02 (NECA funded)
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CSD VRS Operations - Sprint

- CSD currently processes 100% of all Sprint VRS calls
 - CSD currently supports VRS calls from 20 Sprint states on the USAVRS platform
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History of VRS Rates

- States purchase VRS stations through a flat monthly reimbursement agreement (approximately \$40,000 per VI position)
- Prices vary based upon hours of operation and occupancy requirements

- NECA uses conversation minute cost structure
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Comparison of Costs

- TRS agents cost average of \$8/hour.
 - *VRS agents cost average of \$45/50/hour.*
 - TRS agents occupancy is at 80-90%.
 - *VRS agents occupancy is at 35-40%.*
 - That presents a labor cost multiple of 6 for the hourly wage, and 2 for the occupancy.
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Labor Comparison Cost Comparison Labor Rate Differences

- Agent requirements (sign language interpreting skills versus typing skills)
 - Level of certification required of Video Relay Interpreter versus TRS operator
 - Historical market rates and growing demand for interpreting support (ADA)
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Occupancy Differences

- Small volume of VRS calls (5,000+ minutes per day) versus high volume of TRS calls (100,000+ minutes per day)
 - High occupancy with TRS does not contribute to higher Average Speed of Answer (ASA) because of the large number of calls and efficiencies gained with large workforce capacity (spikes easily absorbed)
 - High occupancy with VRS would significantly contribute to higher ASA and deter users from accessing the service (spikes not easily absorbed)
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Issues that Impact VRS Providers

- Defining blockage in the multi-media IP world

- Determining ASA requirements with current usage rates
 - Method of reimbursement
 - Call processing requirements unique to VI's
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CSD's Trends for VRS

- Decreases in VRS costs may occur as occupancy and volumes both increase and interpreters remain available
 - Impact of waiver expiration is being assessed
 - Need to further communicate our experience on proposed standards (Average Speed of Answer and Blockage)
 - Interpreter availability
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Closing Remarks

- CSD is hoping to submit costs for the next NECA filing which will begin to trend downward over time
 - CSD or Sprint may be following up with a written submission to the Commission and request a follow-up meeting to discuss some of the VRS standards and how they may specifically impact these costs
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Thank you!